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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [ECON](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NORTHWEST BAGHDAD SUMMIT SHOWCASES SUCCESSFUL
STEPS TOWARD RECONCILIATION

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Ellen Germain, Reason: Secti
on 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a Baghdad EPRT-5 reporting cable.

12. (SBU) Summary. A distinctive reconciliation movement has taken hold north of Baghdad's city center, spanning the qadas (counties) of Taji and Abu Ghraib. On November 8, 1/1 CAV Brigade Combat Team Commander and Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (EPRT) Leader facilitated the Northwest Baghdad Regional Security Summit with local tribal leaders in Taji. The summit, covered positively in local and foreign media, marked the culmination of several months of joint efforts among local residents, EPRT, Coalition Forces, and Iraqi Security Forces to combat Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and other extremists, and highlighted the achievements of a successful reconciliation process that has brought together the local Sunni and Shia populations. More than 300 local tribal leaders attended the summit, in addition to Government of Iraq (GOI) representatives from the Prime Minister's office, the Baghdad Operations Center, the service ministries, the National Reconciliation Committee, and the Baghdad Provincial Council. Summit participants delivered a strong message to the GOI: "We've provided security*now deliver services." The event allowed Taji Shiekh to voice local needs directly to the GOI, and elevated Taji as a model that adjacent areas -- still in earlier stages of reconciliation -- can emulate. Although limited GOI presence at the event was important, the summit highlighted the failure of Baghdad's national, provincial and local government to deliver the services and resources needed by Taji residents. End summary.

"Taji Awakening:" a Model of Reconciliation in Baghdad Province

13. (SBU) Reconciliation in Taji has so far progressed unusually rapidly, as locals have for several months simultaneously fought extremists (both AQI and Shia militants) and engaged in cross-sectarian dialogue; few areas outside Taji -- if any -- began Sunni-Shia engagement so early in the process of reconciliation. In Baghdad's central districts, most residents who have so far participated in cross-sectarian dialogue have not dared publicize their activities. By contrast, the local Sheikhs who led the Taji summit invited media from all over the world to their cross-sectarian security summit. The venue itself lay astride a fault line between the powerful Tamimi tribe (70 percent Shia) and the influential Dulaimi, Mashhedani, and Obaidy (all Sunni) tribes.

14. (SBU) In this third reconciliation meeting brokered by the Brigade and EPRT, local Sheikhs, Iraqi Police and Army representatives, and national, provincial, and local government officials drove to the event down roads once mined with improvised explosive devices to show their collective support for reconciliation in Taji. (Note: the first two

meetings were in August and October, respectively. A fourth meeting is planned for Abu Ghraib in December. End note.) Shiekh Nadim, a respected Tamini Shia, presided over the event, thanked the national government and Coalition Forces profusely for their assistance with reconciliation, and linked sustainable security to strong local government and economic security.

Security Must Be Followed By Services

15. (SBU) Local Sheikhs came to the summit prepared to discuss the next steps required to sustain reconciliation in Taji. The theme throughout the summit was the need for improved services: namely, agricultural support, education, water resources, secondary roads, and employment opportunities. Summit participants said that Taji, a predominately rural area that covers more than 375 square miles, has not received much in the way of services for almost four years. GOI representatives claimed that improved security has paved the way for the GOI to address local needs. Local and provincial government representatives, however, did not describe plans or state their commitment to meet the service needs described by Taji residents.

Comment

16. (C) Though the people of Taji have taken important steps toward reconciliation, problems remain. Firstly, national-level GOI officials continue to focus attention on Baghdad's central city districts at the expense of the rural counties of Baghdad Province. Secondly, although security has improved in tandem with the reconciliation process,

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Baghdad provincial and local entities continue to be slow to address the mounting service needs in Taji and other qadas. Finally, the service ministries have also proved inefficient and ineffective in delivering services and resources to outlying qadas like Taji and Abu Ghraib. In the qadas of Baghdad, local Shiekh can and do use informal channels to gain support; however, their work cannot substitute for the role of the local and provincial government. Efforts by EPRT-5 and the Baghdad PRT to bolster these sub-national governments and the linkages between them continue apace. End comment.
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